

REMARKS

The above amendments and these remarks are responsive to the Office action dated October 6, 2004. In the Office action, claims 1, 2, and 5 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) based on U.S. Pat. No. 6290557 to Yokoya, and Claims 1-5 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) based on Japan '037. Applicants respectfully traverse the rejections, but nevertheless amend the claims as indicated above. In view of the amendments above, and the remarks below, applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the application under 37 C.F.R. § 1.111 and allowance of the pending claims.

Claim 1

Original claim 1 has been amended to be combined with original claim 2, and to recite structural features of the exhaust pipe. Specifically, claim 1 has been amended to recite that the exhaust pipe is "configured to allow an inside of the exhaust chamber and an outside of the watercraft to communicate with each other," and to recite that the exhaust pipe includes a "downstream end portion in the flow passage of the exhaust gas, which is connected to a body of the watercraft so as to open outside the watercraft." One potential advantage of such a configuration is that it may be possible to inhibit generation of exhaust noise and leakage of exhaust noise to outside of the watercraft, as explained in the Specification at Paragraph 0059. Such structural features, in combination with the remaining elements of the claim, are not disclosed or suggested by Yokoya or Japan '037. Therefore, applicants respectfully submit that claim 1 is allowable.

Claim 2

Claim 2 has been cancelled without prejudice.

Claim 3

Claim 3 has been amended to depend from claim 1, and thus applicants respectfully submit that claim 3 is allowable.

Claim 4

Original claim 4 recited that the exhaust chamber includes a first exhaust chamber and a second exhaust chamber. Claim 4 has been amended to recite that the first exhaust chamber is provided on one side of the water jet pump to be located on an upstream side in the flow passage of the exhaust gas, and that the second exhaust chamber is provided on an opposite side of the water jet pump to be located on a downstream side in the flow passage of the exhaust gas and configured to communicate with the first exhaust chamber through a pipe member provided to extend in a lateral direction of the watercraft over the water jet pump. One exemplary embodiment of such a configuration is illustrated in Fig. 3, reproduced below.

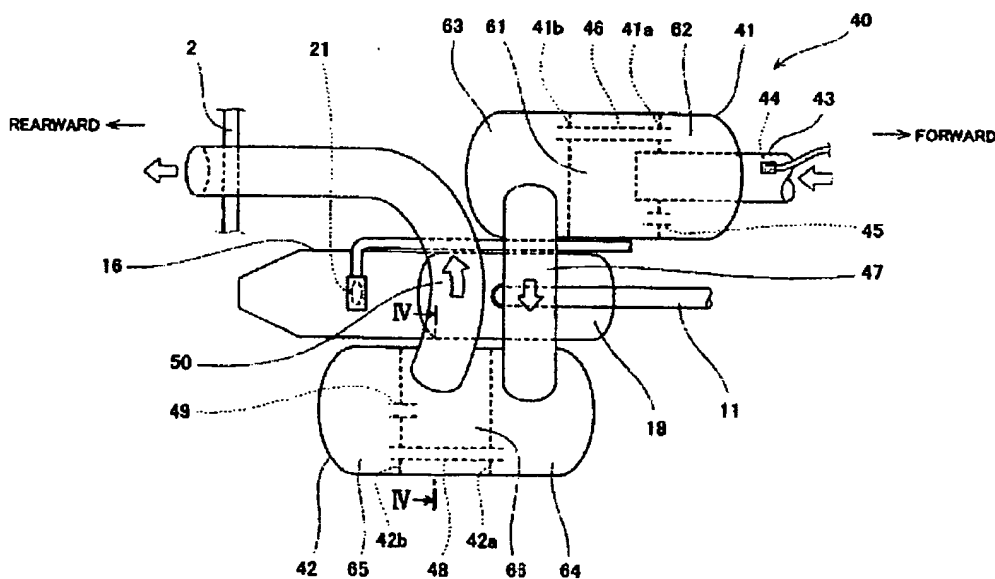


Fig. 3

One potential advantage of such a configuration is that the pipe member (illustrated at 47 in Fig. 3) extending in the lateral direction of the water jet pump and over the water pump may function as a water lock, to inhibit entry of water into the engine. Another potential advantage is that the structure and placement of the upstream end portion of the exhaust pipe (illustrated at 50 in Fig. 3) serves to inhibit substantially generation of exhaust noise, as well as leakage of exhaust noise to outside the watercraft.

These features added by amendment, in combination with the remaining features of claim 4, are not disclosed or suggested in Yokoya or Japan '037, and therefore applicant respectfully submits that claim 4 is allowable.

Claim 5

Claim 5 has been amended to recite that the exhaust chamber includes a first exhaust chamber and a second exhaust chamber, each being provided on an opposite side of the water jet pump, and further to recite that the first and second exhaust chambers are configured to communicate through a connecting pipe extending laterally of, and over, the water jet pump. For the reasons discussed above in relation to claim 4, applicant respectfully submits that the combination of features of amended claim 5 is not disclosed in either Yokoya or Japan '037, and therefore claim 5 is allowable.

Claim 6

Claim 6 has been added to further define structural features of the upstream end portion of the exhaust pipe. Applicants believe that claim 6 is allowable.

In view of the above amendments and remarks, applicants believe that this application is now in condition for allowance. Accordingly, applicants respectfully request that the Examiner issue a Notice of Allowability covering the pending claims. If the Examiner has any questions, or

if a telephone interview would in any way advance prosecution of the application, please contact the undersigned attorney of record.

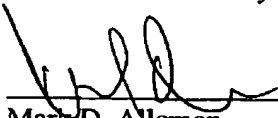
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I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service as first class mail, postage prepaid, to: Mail Stop AMENDMENT, Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450 on February 4, 2005.



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